

Lifting the Veil on the Brontë Juvenilia:
A Study of the Gondal Saga and *Wuthering Heights*

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The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
May, 2013

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ENGLISH
at
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
May, 2013

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ABSTRACT

In 1848, before her death, Emily Brontë completed a novel that has transcended time and has become a staple of classic Victorian literature; that novel is *Wuthering Heights*. While many have read or have heard of this novel, the origination of the tale has been left to speculation and uncertainty. I hope to uncover some of the truth behind the novel's origination by comparing its plot, themes and characters to Emily's juvenilia poetry. The Gondal poetry, as it has come to be called, gives a greater insight into the framework for the novel, and through careful explication of specific passages, can be seen as a precursor to the popular gothic novel. While *Wuthering Heights* is a fictional story, I will give details that will explain that through studying the novel in relation to the juvenilia, it is more than possible that her writing contains elements of her personal life, environment and viewpoints.

INTRODUCTION

Studying the Brontë family could be compared to trying to study a painting that is partially covered by a thick curtain. It would be incorrect to state that the published writings of the Brontë family are inaccessible, and also incorrect to state that many of the unpublished works are inaccessible. Instead, it is the thoughts and ideas behind these works that people wish to know, but many of the diary papers and letters, which would reveal these thoughts, have been destroyed, thus rendering them unable to be studied. In order to fill in these gaps, it would be logical to turn to the diary pages and letters that are still intact, but this is insufficient. It could be possible then, to turn to the works themselves and viewing their content as purely autobiographical. The siblings' works have been turned into fan fiction and several film adaptations in an attempt at portraying the siblings' lives as paralleled to their fictional character, but we can look deeper into Emily Brontë's works. *Wuthering Heights* was written by Emily between the years 1845-1846, while she was still developing the world found in the "Gondal poetry" from her childhood.¹ Emily and her siblings' writing of the Gondal poetry began as a game in conjunction with a gift given to Branwell Brontë.

In June of 1829, Branwell Brontë received a gift of toy soldiers.² These toys became the basis for a fictional world collaborated on by the four siblings: Branwell, Charlotte, Emily, and Anne. Eventually, the group split off into two pairs; Branwell

¹ Charlotte Brontë, Emily Brontë, and Anne Brontë. *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*. Ed. Christine Alexander. Oxford, England: Oxford UP, 2010. Liii-vi. Print.

² Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XIV

and Charlotte created the worlds of Angria and Glass Town, while Emily and Anne created Gondal. These stories were written primarily in the poetic form, and while it is believed that prose existed, it has all been destroyed.³ Although traditionally juvenilia apply only to the writing of children or adolescents, Emily continued the writing that is now classified as her juvenilia for the entire duration of her life. The length of time that Emily spent writing her juvenilia has been the catalyst for the conclusion that Emily's *Wuthering Heights* is derived, at least in part, from the Gondal poetry. Most of Emily's thoughts were devoted to the world of Gondal for the better part of her life, which resulted in many of the characters and their personalities being derived from real-life events and individuals. Through the idea that real-world individuals, including her family members and those within her everyday life, were inspiration for the Gondal characters, we can see that it is possible to argue Emily's life, and therefore her personality, has been embedded within the Gondal poetry and throughout *Wuthering Heights*. One of the main characters of the novel, Catherine, can be compared with Gondal's heroine Augusta Geraldine Almeda, A.G.A., and, going further, Emily herself.⁴ Catherine and Emily are most closely related through their personality characteristics. Both Catherine and A.G.A. had romantic relationships in their fictional worlds and although it is unclear whether or not Emily had a romantic relationship with a man, she did have a close relationship to both males in her family: her brother Branwell and father Patrick. The separation between Emily's imagination and the reality of her life often gets

³ Mary Visick. *The Genesis of Wuthering Heights*. Stroud: Ian Hodgkins, 1980. Print.

⁴ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XXXVI

blurred when discussing the work of Emily Brontë and her family, but I do believe that in studying her juvenilia Gondal poetry in comparison with her late novel, *Wuthering Heights*, that some of that distinction can be brought into a sharper focus.

FROM GONDAL TO *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*:
AN EXPLICATION OF THE PARALLELS BETWEEN EMILY'S EARLY AND LATER
WORKS

All too often, poetry and narrative are split into two completely separate genres of writing, but what if one depended upon the other in the creation process? Emily Brontë began writing as a child, and before her death wrote the literary classic, *Wuthering Heights*. Many have at least heard of her novel if they have not read it, but what often goes unheard of is her work prior to her only published novel. Writing and literacy were always a part of Emily's life. After the death of their mother, the oldest of the children, Maria, read to her younger siblings and after her death Charlotte took over the task. When they could, they were able to read books themselves out of their father's library⁵. After Branwell received the toy soldiers, the siblings applied their reading skills to writing their own made up stories and poems.⁶ What we now study as the Gondal poems are a result of the siblings' splitting off into pairs to make up their own stories. Branwell and Charlotte worked together on the tales of Glass Town and Angria, while Emily and Anne worked on Gondal.⁷ Scholars such as Edward Chitham and David Roper have delved into the order of the Gondal poetry and how to make cohesive sense

⁵ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XVI

⁶ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XIV

⁷ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, LIII

of a narrative thread that runs throughout the poems. I do not believe the order of the poems to be as important as the influence that those writings had on Emily as a writer and novelist. Upon looking at the major themes found throughout the Gondal poetry and within *Wuthering Heights*, many repeating crossovers are seen. Both the poems and the novel have many references to nature, the supernatural and violence. The natural elements can be traced back to Emily's own personal experiences, but what about the others? Did Emily feel she was surrounded by supernatural thoughts or experiences and did she ever experience actual violence? In addition to there being a pattern in repeating themes, there is also a connection between the heroines of each tale. Augusta Geraldine Almeda (A.G.A) is the heroine of Gondal and is often portrayed as being in relationships with men. However, A.G.A appears to hold the upper hand in many of these relationships. Similarly in *Wuthering Heights*, the reader is introduced to Catherine Earnshaw and her relationship with a man of much lower class, Heathcliff. Catherine is seen throughout the novel as being able to manipulate those around her. Many of the same themes are overlapped between *Wuthering Heights* and Gondal including images of nature to express turmoil and devastation, supernatural occurrences, and infliction of violent behavior; but it is through the fictional characters that we can clearly see a crossover into Emily's life.

It is possible for a reader to see a common thread of natural elements throughout both the Gondal poetry and *Wuthering Heights* and dismiss it as being a mere coincidence, but the elements of nature are unarguably intentionally

placed within each work for thematic and symbolic purposes. Emily herself grew up in Haworth, England and played along the Yorkshire moors as a child.⁸ Emily spent an ample amount of time out on the moors and therefore knew them well enough to write about them and the weather that goes along with those living conditions.⁹ In a letter written to James Taylor on May 20, 1850 Charlotte wrote, "For my part I am free to walk on the moors...My sister Emily had a particular love for them, and there is not a knoll of heather, not a branch of fern, not a young bilberry leaf not a fluttering lark or linnet but reminds me of her."¹⁰ In addition to growing up on the moors, Emily probably also became interested in writing about nature through reading Wordsworth's poetry. Christina Alexander argues this point in the introduction to the Oxford edition of *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal* in saying, "The supreme importance of nature, whether Scottish or Yorkshire, in the Gondal poems, however, owes as much to Emily and Anne's close affinities to Wordsworth as to their own childhood experiences on the moors."¹¹ Mary Visick echoes this sentiment in her book, *The Genesis of Wuthering Heights* when she says, "...it is hard to realize that she was a contemporary of Tennyson—to a cold, clear simplicity which has affinities with the diction of Wordsworth, whom she almost certainly read."¹² Emily's affinity to Wordsworth's use of natural

⁸ "Family and Friends - Emily Jane Brontë." *Emily Jane Brontë*. The Brontë Society, n.d. Web. 25 Mar. 2013

⁹ Barker, Juliet. *The Brontës A Life in Letters*. Woodstock: Overlook, 2002. 280. Print.

¹⁰ Barker, *A Life in Letters*, 280

¹¹ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XXXIV

¹² Visick, *The Genesis of Wuthering Heights*, 2

elements and his writing style seem quite plausible. Wordsworth was a poet during Emily's life (he lived 1770-1850) who utilized nature to depict the "dreary intercourse of daily life."¹³ The fictional family estate of Wuthering Heights in the novel is also placed along the moors and, according to the Brontë Society the Top Withins estate on the Yorkshire Moors is the location of the estate off of which the fictional residence is based.¹⁴ In the novel, Catherine and Heathcliff often play along the moors that are near Wuthering Heights.

Wuthering Heights is the name of Mr. Heathcliff's dwelling.

'Wuthering' being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather.¹⁵

From the beginning of the novel, Emily makes it very clear that the weather surrounding the estate is "tumultuous." While this may not mean much to the reader so early in the plot line, later the reader sees that the weather and the strong architecture of the house is symbolic of the violence within, and the strength of the characters enduring the abusive relationships that take place within the house's walls. In the Gondal poetry, the elements of nature can also be prevalently seen. In a poem dated December 13, 1836, Emily writes of the destructive power of the wind. The poem begins with, "High waving heather 'neath

¹³ "William Wordsworth." *The Poetry Foundation*. N.p., n.d. Web.

¹⁴ "Haworth & The Brontës - Brontë Places." *Brontë Places*. The Brontë Society, n.d. Web.

¹⁵ Brontë, Emily, Margaret Drabble, Hugh Osborne, Philip Henderson, and Emily Brontë. *Wuthering Heights ; And, Poems*. London: J.M Dent, 1993. 4. Print.

stormy blasts bending.”¹⁶ Here, Emily sets the reader up from the beginning with the knowledge that the wind and nature are very important elements that will symbolize later elements of the story within the poem. The second stanza of the poem continues with the symbolic natural elements.

All down the mountain sides wild forests lending
 One mighty voice to the life giving wind
 Rivers their banks in the jubilee rending
 Fast through the vallys a reckless course wending
 Wider and deeper their waters extending
 Leaving a desolate desert behind¹⁷

There are many elements that can be pulled from this stanza of poetry alone, but here our primary interest is looking at those elements representing nature. Again, the wind is very powerful and “reckless” and when it is through, the valley is left as desolate as a desert. If taken literally, the reader may picture an actual valley with a powerful wind whipping through it, like a tornado. However, it is important to look beyond the obvious and analyze the implications of such a reference. The wind, in much of Emily’s work, is violent and sudden and always wreaks havoc on the outside world. The same pattern can be seen in *Wuthering Heights*. Here, I’d like to place an emphasis on the last line of the stanza, “Leaving a desolate desert behind.” The death of Catherine’s father, Mr. Earnshaw, acts as a major plot point

¹⁶ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, 393

¹⁷ Emily Brontë’s poem as quoted in *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, 393

that changes the course of the other character's lives. In chapter five of the novel, the reader sees the death of Mr. Earnshaw coupled with the symbolism of the wicked winds outside.

But the hour came, at last, that ended Mr. Earnshaw's troubles on earth. He died quietly in his chair one October evening, seated by the fireside. A high wind blustered round the house, and roared in the chimney: it sounded wild and stormy, yet it was not cold, and we were all together...¹⁸

Mr. Earnshaw was kind and often kept the peace within his home, but when he is gone and the estate is left to his son, the violence becomes more brutal and the damage more lasting. The wind is again seen as an outside force, but paralleled with an equally damaging event within the house's walls. In this case, the family is calm, but once Mr. Earnshaw is gone, the house will be in turmoil.

We can look at Emily's use of the wind and snow to suggest her character's feelings of entrapment as another instance of similarity in her works in comparing the poems and the novel. In a poem dated November 1837, she writes of the winds and the cold and that they are keeping the character at bay until the turmoil subsides. Similarly in the first chapter of *Wuthering Heights*, Mr. Lockwood arrives at the Heights during a snowstorm and although his intentions were only to stay for a short visit, he becomes stuck and must stay for the whole night in Heathcliff's home. The poem reads:

¹⁸ Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 37

The night is darkening round me
 The wild winds coldly blow
 But a tyrant spell has bound me
 And I cannot cannot go
 The giant trees are bending
 Their bare boughs weighed with snow
 And the storm is fast descending
 And yet I cannot go
 Clouds beyond clouds above me
 Wastes beyond wastes below
 But nothing drear can move me
 I will not cannot go ¹⁹

This poem can be compared with the scene in Emily's novel by looking at
 Heathcliff's reply to Mr. Lockwood's desire to leave during the storm.

'Half an hour?' he said, shaking the white flakes from his clothes; 'I
 wonder you should select the thick of a snowstorm to ramble about
 in. Do you know that you run a risk of being lost in the marshes?
 People familiar with these moors often miss their road on such
 evenings; and I can tell you there is no chance of a change at
 present.' ²⁰

¹⁹ Emily Brontë's poem as quoted in *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, 397

²⁰ Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 11

There is a clear feeling of entrapment in both of these passages. Emily utilizes the weather throughout her works and every so often the reader can see very clear similarities between her earlier poetry and her novel. Perhaps she was not thinking explicitly of Mr. Lockwood while writing her 1837 Gondal poem, but it could be argued that when she sat down to write her novel, that poem cropped up in her mind. The idea of utilizing the cold and wind to trap a character in a specific location for a set duration of time could have come back to her and now it can be read in both her poetry and her novel. So far, we have only delved into the natural elements that are present in both the Gondal poetry and *Wuthering Heights*. In both works, the reader is able to see the negative connotations of nature and how its presence tends to bring with it feelings of entrapment or isolation.

While nature plays a large roll in Emily's depictions of her characters' feelings of entrapment and isolation, Emily also gives credence to nature's more positive connotations. More explicitly, we will now examine how Emily also portrays nature as a form of freedom in both her poetry and her novel. First, let's look at Emily's poem, "Often rebuked, yet always back returning." In stanza four of this poem, Emily expresses the importance of a person's own human nature.

I'll walk where my own nature would be leading:

It vexes me to choose another guide:

Where the grey flocks in ferny glens are feeding;

Where the wild wind blows on the mountain side.²¹

²¹ Emily Brontë's poem in Roper's *The Poems of Emily Brontë*, 222-223

Starting with this poem, we see Emily's desire for freedom of the self; in other words, she wishes for her "own nature" to lead her throughout life. Here, we see a glimpse of what I would consider Emily's independence. She wishes to be her own guide where the "wild wind blows on the mountain side." By this, I believe Emily means that life can be full of "wild wind" or slight turmoil, but she is not afraid to go confidently in her own direction despite whatever "wild wind" she may encounter. This depiction of nature is the exact opposite of the feelings of entrapment that we have already delved into. Before going further we will first look at the last stanza of the poem that shows how Emily still views nature as both freeing and as a form of isolation.

What have those lonely mountains worth revealing?

More glory and more grief than I can tell:

The earth that wakes *one* human heart to feeling

Can centre both the worlds of Heaven and Hell.²²

In this final stanza it can be seen without too much explication that Emily views nature as both a source of "glory" but also of "grief." The idea that Emily saw the earth as both a key to send the human heart to "Heaven and Hell" is important as we go on to see other instances of Emily's use of nature as a source of freedom in *Wuthering Heights* and her poetry.

In Martha Nussbaum's article, "*Wuthering Heights*: the Romantic Ascent," she focuses primarily on the views of Christianity throughout *Wuthering Heights*

²² Emily Brontë's poem in Roper's, *The Poems of Emily Brontë*, 222-223

and Emily's poetry but she also gives key examples of Emily's use of nature which I agree with and feel are worth looking at more in-depth. Catherine passes away at her home at Thrushcross Grange in chapter fifteen of the novel. It is here that Heathcliff returns and holds Catherine in his arms until she dies. Nussbaum explicates Heathcliff's visit to Catherine's bedside further to see that Catherine leaps outward toward "her beloved moors and winds, severed from which would find heaven miserable; not toward God but toward Heathcliff, the lover of her soul"²³. Earlier, we saw Catherine explain Emily's love for the moors and nature in her 1850 letter to James Taylor. Through Nussbaum's argument, we see that Emily holds a great affinity toward nature. Not only does she find that it is powerful enough to be destructive and create isolation, she also believes that it is more important than God. Emily makes her ideas of nature prevalent in her work and we have seen Catherine hold the same affinity toward nature that Emily herself holds. As we have seen in chapter nine of the novel, Catherine believes that she belongs at Wuthering Heights and as Nussbaum points out, at her "beloved" moors instead of in Heaven. In the Bible, which Emily's father would have preached out of, Deuteronomy 33:12 says, "Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in him, for he shields him all day long." According to Nussbaum, Catherine feels that the moors are her "beloved," not the Lord. Emily grew up in a parsonage home with a preacher for a father and therefore would have been familiar with the Bible

²³ Nussbaum, Martha. "Wuthering Heights: The Romantic Ascent." *Philosophy and Literature* (n.d.): 362-82. Rpt. in *Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë: A Norton Critical Edition*. N.p.: W.W. Norton &, 2003. 394-410. Print.

and its teachings. I agree with Nussbaum's choice of the word "beloved" to describe Catherine's feelings toward nature and I also feel that it can be applied to Emily as well. As we have seen, Emily uses nature and its imagery throughout her poetry and her prose and she finds it important enough to cast a strong affinity toward it onto her character Catherine as well.

Now that we have seen Emily's love for nature and have seen it used in both negative and positive connotations, let's look at it again in terms of the settings in *Wuthering Heights*, namely the main two family estates Emily used in the novel. Wuthering Heights is situated among the moors and is the place where Catherine and Heathcliff grow up and are able to play in the heather along the moors, and also the location of much of the violence in the novel. Thrushcross Grange is the home of the Lintons who are wealthy and upper class. Opposite to Wuthering Heights where Catherine lived, the Grange is where she dies. From this comparison alone we can see that despite the violence, Wuthering Heights, a home built along the moors, is a place of life and passion and Thrushcross Grange is the place where Catherine loses her life and Heathcliff loses his through the death of Catherine, his love. Here, we can make a connection between the natural elements found at Wuthering Heights and our previous argument of Catherine's love of nature. As pointed out, Emily holds a great love for nature and she gives Catherine that same love. If Wuthering Heights is full of natural elements and located along the moors, it would make sense for Catherine to feel alive there. Nussbaum also touches on the differences between the Grange and the Heights.

For the world of the Lintons, the heavenly world, is also depicted as a shallow world: an indoor world, by contrast to the wild and passionate world of the moors, a world of stasis by contrast to Heathcliff and Cathy's restless motion, a world of ungenerous and spiteful social judgments, by contrast to the sweep and size of all of Heathcliff's passions.²⁴

I agree with Nussbaum's argument that the home of the Lintons is shallow in comparison to the freedom found at Wuthering Heights. This freedom that is found at Wuthering Heights is what can be lost when looking so closely at only the entrapment and isolation that is often seen paralleled with nature. I would like to emphasize the point that Catherine lived and thrived at Wuthering Heights despite the negativity found within its walls. I believe this to be due to her freedom to follow her own "nature." In chapter fourteen of *Wuthering Heights*, Nussbaum quotes Heathcliff saying, "He might as well plant an oak in a flowerpot, and expect it to thrive, as imagine he can restore her to vigour in the soil of his shallow cares!" Of course here Heathcliff is referring to the stifling nature of Thrushcross Grange that Edgar Linton provides for his wife instead of the wild and natural environment found at Wuthering Heights where Heathcliff could provide Catherine with the space to roam and the freedom to follow her own path.

While nature most assuredly still brings with it acts of violence and negative connotations, as we have seen in Emily's poem, "Often rebuked, yet

²⁴ Nussbaum, 402

always back returning” Emily does not need for nature to only symbolize one or the other. “The world of nature and the earth, by contrast, is a world in which the heart can roam freely, and its agency is whole”²⁵. Perhaps, instead of a stark break between being negative and positive, Emily wishes for us to see how it is possible to be both. We have referred to human nature, and as humans we are all inherently both bad and good. Think about Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; Dr. Jekyll cannot fully separate his sinful side and his virtuous side, he is both. I think that Emily is trying to make a similar point. Catherine and Heathcliff are neither bad nor good, and neither is nature. Catherine is the daughter of a good man and has good, yet selfish intentions. Heathcliff is a misunderstood orphan who has been ill-treated by society. Just as a person’s human nature is to be free of confines, so to is nature free of any confines and therefore can effortlessly transform from isolating to freeing.

Emily shows that nature has violent characteristics and that supernatural events can also hold violent implications. Elements of supernatural events are found all throughout *Wuthering Heights* but perhaps the most striking is the plot line that follows the love between Catherine Earnshaw (Linton) and Heathcliff. Once Catherine dies, instead of wishing her peace, Heathcliff wishes the opposite and prays that her ghost will haunt him for the rest of his life on earth until they can again be together. Aside from this illustrating Heathcliff’s selfish tendency, it is a clear depiction of the supernatural in the novel.

²⁵ Nussbaum, 405

And I pray one prayer—I repeat it till my tongue stiffens—Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living! You said I killed you—haunt me, then! The murdered *do* haunt their murderers, I believe. I know that ghosts *have* wandered on earth. Be with me always—take any form—drive me mad! Oh, God! it is unutterable! I *cannot* live without my life! I *cannot* live without my soul!²⁶

In this passage from chapter sixteen in the novel, Heathcliff has just found out about Catherine's death and is explaining how he wishes her to haunt him. This is foreshadowed in the beginning of the novel as well when Mr. Lockwood claims to have seen Catherine's ghost outside of his window. Lockwood wakes up from his sleep by a noise at the window and when he reaches out, he grabs another hand. The hand is the ghost of Catherine Linton who yells, "Let me in—Let me in!"²⁷ Ghosts and apparitions are a common repetition throughout the supernatural theme of the novel. *Wuthering Heights* is a gothic novel, and the supernatural elements can't be ignored. However, those elements were found in Emily's poetry before the novel ever came to fruition.

Between 1842 and 1843, Emily wrote a poem regarding Aspin Castle²⁸. In this poem, she is again mixing feelings of love with supernatural elements. "It would seem that the ghost of Lord Alfred 'walks' unquietly: that he died far away

²⁶ Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 144

²⁷ Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 22

²⁸ Roper, David. *The Poems of Emily Brontë*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995. 131. Print.

and in despair; and that the heroine of the saga in some way destroyed him,"²⁹.

Visick explains the supernatural element of the poem through the ghost of Lord Alfred. The poem begins with, "How do I love on summer night," before venturing into 24 stanzas of verse that combine natural, supernatural, and emotional elements. The seventh stanza very clearly resembles the beginning of *Wuthering Heights*.

For round their hearths they'll tell this tale,
And every listener swears it true;
How wanders there a phantom pale
With spirit-eyes of dreamy blue.³⁰

In the beginning of the novel, Mr. Lockwood sits with Nelly Dean at Thrushcross Grange and hears the tale of Catherine and Heathcliff (and thus the novel itself unfolds). Nelly tells Lockwood of the ghost of Catherine and by the end, Lockwood is convinced, and so is the reader, that the tale must be true. The poem progresses to stanza eight which ends with, "But brooding on that angel brow/ Rests such a shade of deep despair,/ As nought divine could ever know." Catherine could arguably be considered Heathcliff's "angel" as she is said to haunt him after her death. Also, Catherine's life was filled with selfish ideas but also "despair as nought divine could ever know." In chapter nine of the novel, Catherine explains a dream that she had about heaven to Nelly.

²⁹ Visick, *The Genesis of Wuthering Heights*, 26

³⁰ Emily Brontë's poem as quoted in *The Poems of Emily Brontë*

‘I was only going to say that heaven did not seem to be my home;
and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the
angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the
heath on the top of Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing with
joy...’³¹

Catherine does not feel that heaven, where the divine and unselfish go, could ever be her home. Stanza nineteen of the poem illustrates the best comparison between the characters of the poem and Catherine and Heathcliff.

And this is she for whom he died!
For whome his spirit unforgiven,
Wanders unsheltered, shut from heaven,
An outcast for eternity—³²

Although the poem flips the gender roles seen in the novel, the comparison is almost exact. Catherine physically dies, and as a result, part of Heathcliff’s soul dies and remains in wait for his own physical death to rejoin his love. Catherine feels that her spirit is “unforgiven” and she “wanders unsheltered, shut from heaven,” until she is joined with Heathcliff for eternity. This find is crucial in the argument that Emily utilized elements from her poetry to inspire *Wuthering Heights*.

This poem was written in 1843, only a few years before *Wuthering Heights* was published. Visick believes Lord Alfred to be comparable to Edgar Linton. She

³¹ Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 69

³² Emily Brontë’s poem as quoted in, *The Poems of Emily Brontë*

says, “In passing, we may notice that a portrait of Lord Alfred is described, and it sounds not unlike the portrait of Edgar which Nelly shows Lockwood in *Wuthering Heights*,”³³. The portrait Visick is referring to is simply the descriptions of Edgar throughout the novel. In chapter seven, the reader sees Heathcliff’s insecurities with Edgar from being of a different class in society and therefore with a rougher outward appearance.

‘But, Nelly, if I knocked him down twenty times, that wouldn’t make him less handsome or me more so. I wish I had light hair and a fair skin, and was dressed and behaved as well, and had a chance of being as rich as he will be!’³⁴

Edgar is a rich man from an affluent family who is well dressed and has good manners. While I do believe that especially this stanza of the poem is reminiscent of Catherine and Heathcliff, the idea of the male figure being Edgar is not inconceivable. Catherine does “love” Edgar as well and marries him, like A.G.A. was married to Lord Alfred. But the passionate language and the “shutting out from heaven” make me believe the poem is best compared to Heathcliff. Heathcliff is passionate and wild and Edgar is careful and traditional. Regardless of the male figure depicted in the poem, the point remains that Emily is utilizing elements of the supernatural to convey Catherine’s feelings of not being welcomed into Heaven. Martha Nussbaum would argue that Catherine’s lack of acceptance in Heaven would arise from the lack of nature and freedom, which she finds only at

³³ Visick, *The Genesis of Wuthering Heights*, 27

³⁴ Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 48

Wuthering Heights³⁵. We have already looked into the natural elements found at the Heights in contrast with the lack of natural imagery found at the Grange.

While I agree with Nussbaum that Catherine's lack of acceptance into Heaven is due to her affinity toward nature and the Heights, I would also like to focus on the use of the supernatural to illustrate the common thread between the poetry and the novel. Although the plot lines between Gondal and *Wuthering Heights* are not exactly the same, the similarities are striking and support the argument that Emily did in fact pull ideas from her earlier poetry to help in writing her novel.

The negative symbolism found in nature, along with the supernatural elements found throughout the poems and the novel show clear resemblances between Emily's works, but the similarities between her work's heroines is perhaps the most interesting. While I will not focus on the narrative order of the poems found within Gondal, the heroine, A.G.A that is repeated throughout the poetry is key in discussing the likeness of the poems to the novel. Alexander states that, "the heroine A.G.A. is the subject and speaker of many of Emily's poems. She is a passionate and dark beauty, ruthless in both political and personal relationships, a female alternative to the Byronic heroes of Glass Town and Angria"³⁶. Later, we will explore Augusta's ruthless behavior with the men in her life whom she is romantically involved with either as lovers or husbands. Catherine Earnshaw in *Wuthering Heights* is also a ruthless female character that stands alongside a Byronic counterpart, Heathcliff. Catherine is a woman who will stop at nothing to

³⁵ Nussbaum, 394-395

³⁶ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XXXVII

fulfill her desires and never wants to place blame on herself for hurting others. A clear example of Catherine's stubbornness can be seen in chapter nine. In this chapter, Nelly questions Catherine on her recent engagement to marry Mr. Edgar Linton. Once Catherine explains that it would "degrade her" to marry Heathcliff, he runs away from his place of eavesdropping without telling anyone where he was going³⁷. Upon finding out about Heathcliff's departure, Catherine cannot believe what has happened, even though she had just explained that despite her relationship with him, she would be marrying another man due to Heathcliff's low social status.

‘I never saw Heathcliff last night,’ answered Catherine, beginning to sob bitterly: ‘and if you do turn him out of doors, I’ll go with him. But, perhaps, you’ll never have an opportunity: perhaps he’s gone.’ Here she burst into uncontrollable grief, and the remainder of her words were inarticulate.³⁸

By saying that she had not seen Heathcliff the night before his disappearance, she attempts to distance herself from the situation and displace the blame onto someone else. Here she is speaking to her brother Hindley who has detested Heathcliff since they were children. Hindley is happy that Heathcliff has gone away and he does not wish him to return. Catherine uses this as an opportunity to blame Hindley for wanting to turn Heathcliff out of doors. As the chapter continues, Nelly again addresses Catherine and tries to speak the truth to her and,

³⁷ Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 69

³⁸ Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 76

“lay the blame of his disappearance on her: where indeed it belonged, as she well knew.” After informing Catherine of her fault in Heathcliff’s departure Nelly said, “for several months, she ceased to hold any communication with me, save in the relation of a mere servant”³⁹. Catherine does not wish to be held responsible for her actions, and that is seen in her attitude and responses to the disappearance of her friend and true love.

In 1837, about 10 years before *Wuthering Heights* is published for the first time alongside Charlotte and Anne’s works, Emily wrote a poem from A.G.A. to A.E. about the “Lord of Elbë, on Elbë hill.” In this poem, Augusta addresses her husband Alexander who may have died⁴⁰ (Oxford 575). Similarly to Heathcliff’s disappearance, Alexander has also disappeared and even though he may still be alive, he is dead to Augusta because he is gone. Before explicating that point further, it is interesting to note that in the fourth stanza Augusta says, “Light as thine own.” In chapter nine of *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine also refers to Heathcliff as being herself when she says, “he is more myself than I am.” Since this poem was written so long before *Wuthering Heights* came to the publication phase, Emily had time to develop this aspect of her Gondal heroine into Catherine. Again, just as Heathcliff left Catherine, Alexander also leaves Augusta.

But thou art now on a desolate sea—

Parted from Gondal and parted from me—

All my repining is hopeless and vain,

³⁹ Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 76

⁴⁰ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, 575

Death never yields back his victims again—⁴¹

Catherine has no idea whether Heathcliff is alive or dead, if he is gone permanently or if he will be returning to the Heights after he leaves. In this poem, A.G.A also does not know what has become of her husband who has departed out to sea. Visick, in *The Genesis of Wuthering Heights*, does not draw a parallel between this particular poem and the novel. However, I believe that the similarity of both women treating their lovers leaving as a form of death is very important. This shows that the void they feel of their love leaving is so great that they must mourn their loss. Despite being selfish, and capable of making independent choices, the women still do become very attached to their male counterparts in Emily's works.

Going further into the idea that both Augusta and Catherine are independent and capable of making their own choices, both at one point decide to leave their love. As we have seen, in chapter nine of *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine chooses to love Edgar Linton because he comes from a much higher social class than Heathcliff. Even though Catherine does not want to fully take responsibility for leaving Heathcliff when she dismisses him with her disheartening words, she made a very clear choice when she responded favorably to Linton's proposal. Augusta also chooses to leave her lover which Emily illustrates in her 1838 poem

⁴¹ Emily Brontë's poem as quoted in *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, 396

from A.G.A. to A.S. during which she explains that Augusta is leaving her now husband Alfred Sidonia after having a passionate affair⁴².

O wander not so far away!

O love, forgive this selfish tear.

It may be sad for thee to stay

But how can I live lonely here?⁴³

Here we see a very key difference between Catherine and Augusta. Augusta expresses that she has been selfish in her actions and seeks forgiveness. Catherine is much more childish in that she does not wish to take responsibility for her actions. And yet, the two women were each strong enough to make their own choices. Alfred has not been an adequate husband for Augusta, since she has chosen to have an affair, which has led to her leaving him. Heathcliff does not prove to be a poor lover because he has not had the chance to display his abilities, but his social standing is enough for Catherine to become interested in Edgar and eventually choose to leave and be with him. Despite both women's selfish choices, the men in their lives still hang on to each of them and continue to love them through their faults.

When speaking of *Wuthering Heights* we are continually only mapping Catherine's relationship with Heathcliff, but in the Gondal poetry A.G.A. has several lovers. I think it is important to pause here and look cohesively into

⁴² Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, 577

⁴³ Emily Brontë's poem as quoted in, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, 398

A.G.A.'s lovers and her treatment of them. Alexander explains in the introduction to the Oxford edition of *The Brontës Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal* Augusta's husbands and lovers. Alexander explains that at one time Augusta was either married to or involved with Julius Brenzaida who was the Prince of Angora and "equally ambitious and ruthless"⁴⁴. There was Amedeus, who was the lover of a childhood friend Angelica, but when she tires of him she sends both of them into exile. Next she has an affair and marries Alfred Sidonia but then abandons him (as seen in the 1938 poem) and he dies of a broken heart. Her relationship with Alexander, Lord of Elbë ended violently near Lake Elnor. Fernando De Samara is loved and then driven into exile by, Augusta after which he commits suicide. Finally, Douglass, who was persuaded by Angelica, murders Augusta upon Elmor Hill⁴⁵. Readers of the juvenilia poetry must remember they were written over a span of 20 years, from 1826 to 1848⁴⁶. Therefore, Augusta's relationships developed and changed over that time as well. But what we should look into here, is that in every relationship Augusta somehow dominated over her male counterpart and yet men still loved her. Catherine could not be with Heathcliff due to his social class and yet he returns for her.

Despite their relationships being corrupting, Heathcliff cannot leave Catherine alone and Augusta's lovers also cannot leave her. Here, we will home into Augusta's relationship with Fernando De Samara. In the poem written in 1838,

⁴⁴ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XXXVII

⁴⁵ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XXXVII

⁴⁶ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, LIII

Fernando writes to Augusta after she has forced him into exile⁴⁷. Fernando expresses his feelings for Augusta despite her poor treatment of him. The eleven-stanza poem ends with Fernando exclaiming that he still loves Augusta.

And yet, for all Her hate, each parting glance would tell
A stronger passion breathed, burned in this last farewell—
Unconquered in my soul the Tyrant rules me still
Life bows to my control, but, Love I cannot kill!⁴⁸

Here, Emily makes several key emphases in the writing. Firstly, the word “Her” is capitalized which I take to symbolize her being of a higher being than Fernando. In Christianity, any pronoun references to God are also capitalized. Robert M. Polhemus discusses love as a form of religion in his book, *Erotic Faith: Being in Love from Jane Austen to D. H. Lawrence*. Polhemus writes that, “redemption, if it is possible, lies in personal desire, imaginative power, and love.”⁴⁹ He goes on to explain that in *Wuthering Heights*, the “hope for salvation becomes a matter of eroticized private enterprise.” Here, he is speaking of Catherine and Heathcliff’s relationship. In relation to the poem between Fernando and Augusta, I believe that Polhemus’ view on love and religion can again be applied. In the last line, Fernando says that life bows to his control. In Christianity, God has control over

⁴⁷ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, 578

⁴⁸ Emily Brontë’s poem as quoted in, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, 401

⁴⁹ Polhemus, Robert M. *Erotic Faith: Being in Love from Jane Austen to D. H. Lawrence*. N.p.: University of Chicago, 1995. 82. Print.

everything and everyone, but in Emily's writings her characters wish to hold their own lives in their hands.

The last line of Fernando's poem also resembles Heathcliff's speech after the death of Catherine. Mentioned earlier for its supernatural elements, here it can be again viewed in the context of love as religion. "Oh, God! it is unutterable! I *cannot* live without my life! I *cannot* live without my soul!"⁵⁰. Heathcliff's words parallel Fernando's in that both of the male figures cannot grasp that death is finite. Fernando claims that he cannot kill love, and Heathcliff believes Catherine to be his life as well. Catherine and Heathcliff cannot live fully without one another because they feel that their souls are so completely entwined they are the same being. Catherine exclaims, "If all else perished, and *he* remained, I should still continue to be; and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger: I should not seem a part of it,"⁵¹. Polhemus also refers to this particular passage and says that since humans must have consciousness in death, Catherine and Heathcliff "have faith in their vocation of being in love with one another"⁵². J. Hillis Miller speaks of poems as a form of religion and reiterates that Catherine and Heathcliff are dependent upon each other. Miller explains the connection as an "attempt to reconcile two irreconcilable requirements: the need for a source of spiritual power outside oneself, and the

⁵⁰ Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 144

⁵¹ Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 76

⁵² Polhemus, *Erotic Faith*, 82

need to be self-sufficient.”⁵³ I agree with Polhemus and like Miller’s explanation of the attachment between Catherine and Heathcliff. Both of the characters desire for something, or someone to worship, and to fill this void their passion for each other borders on worship but yet they also each desire to make their own personal choices. Catherine and Heathcliff have turned their eyes from God and placed their faith in one another to the point that their own lives depend on each other’s life. Similarly Fernando cannot fathom that his love with Augusta can ever been killed even though she has cast him out into exile.

Now that we have seen some of the parallels between Catherine and Augusta, it is revealing to delve into the possible psychology behind the characters as developed by Emily. In her 1992 article, “Feminist criticism of *Wuthering Heights*” Patsy Stoneman argues that Emily Brontë not only became an authorial staple of literature, but she has also become a central figure in feminist criticism⁵⁴. Although the intricacies of feminist theory and criticism are not exceptionally important to the argument of *Wuthering Heights* being derived from the Gondal poetry, it is important to pause and glean a greater understanding of Emily’s viewpoint in order to shed light on the development of her characters in relation to her personal life and environment. Stone quotes Juliet Mitchell’s article, “*Wuthering Heights*: Romanticism and Rationality” and says, “The nature and actions of every character in the drama are fully intelligible because they are

⁵³ Miller, J. Hillis. "Emily Brontë." *The Disappearance Of God: Five Nineteenth Century Writers*. N.p.: University of Illinois, 1963. 157-270. Print.

⁵⁴ Stoneman, Patsy. "Feminist Criticism of "Wuthering Heights"" *Critical Survey* 4.2 (1992): 152. JSTOR. Web.

always related to...what we now know to be the most critical phase of life: childhood.” Here, we can see a clear argument for the importance of the study of Emily’s juvenilia in relation to her “adult work.” Emily Brontë, for the most part, chose to remain secluded, despite being in a part of town that was growing in industry and population. Alexander states that Haworth was, “a busy manufacturing community important to the wool trade of the district,”⁵⁵. Understanding Emily’s intentional isolation is important when depicting her as an early feminist. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in chapter eight of their book, *The Madwoman in the Attic* discuss the role of the “angel in the house” in nineteenth century Victorian literature⁵⁶. This angel is meant to be a domestic and spiritual companion and crutch to her husband. Emily echoes her peers’ use of the woman as angel in the house in her poetry and her novel. Earlier, we discussed the poem composed at Aspin Castle written by Emily between 1842 and 1843. I mentioned that stanza eight ends with a mention of an “angel” which could be paralleled with the physical supernatural angel that haunts Heathcliff. Now, I would like to look again at stanza eight.

It always walks with head declined

Its long curls move not in the wind

Its face is fair—devinely fair;

But brooding on that angel brow

⁵⁵ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal*, XV

⁵⁶ Gilbert, Sandra and Susan Gubar. "Chapter 8." *The Madwoman in the Attic*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. N. pag. 598. Print

Rests such a shade of deep despair

As nought divine could ever know

Looking more fully at the stanza, we see that the female being described has long curls that move freely in the wind, symbolizing a wild, free and natural spirit. As previously discussed, the woman in the poem is Augusta. Progressing forward, we see that the “angel brow” is full of despair. This is key in realizing that Emily, too, though perhaps not intentionally, was writing about the nineteenth century angel of the house. Augusta pushed her then husband, Alfred Sidonia, into exile and Alfred eventually died as a result. I think that this clearly shows that for a woman to be free and wild in her character, she risks destroying the man whom she loves. Men had the luxury of being independent beings, but also having the ability to depend upon a woman to take care of them. Gilbert and Gubar quote John Ruskin in saying a woman’s “power is not for rule, not for battle, and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet orderings” of domesticity⁵⁷. Gilbert and Gubar follow Ruskin’s statement with the fact that women were meant to be their “husband’s holy refuge” from their active and taxing lifestyles while the women stayed at home⁵⁸. Emily, although she did attend school for a short period, chose to return home. She did not choose to marry and it is unclear whether or not she ever had romantic relations with a man. Despite her lack of romantic interactions with her male peers and intended isolation within her home, she still had interactions with her father and brother that very well could have influenced and

⁵⁷ Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 601

⁵⁸ Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 601

shaped her opinions of the male population. I believe that Catherine and Augusta are Emily's reactions to the world around her. We see that Augusta loves and marries more than once and, for the most part, holds the upper hand in her relationships. But, as we said earlier, Augusta herself was eventually murdered. Catherine, although she wishes to be independent, centers most of her life and its decisions around her love for Heathcliff and Edgar. Yes, we see Catherine actively choosing to leave Heathcliff, and actively choosing to marry Edgar, but we also see her downfall when Heathcliff returns and she is consumed with her passionate love for him. Emily, as Stoneman said, can now be viewed as an early feminist writer, but she was still influenced by the world around her⁵⁹. Despite both Catherine and Augusta's ardent claims for independence, eventually they both succumbed to death over their choices made for the male figures in their lives.

While the comparisons between the heroines of Emily's work are great, and worth spending ample time explicating, the comparisons between their male counterparts should also be explored. I have already explained that Catherine's Heathcliff is comparable to Augusta's many lovers in the Gondal poetry, but Visick believes him to be related closest to Julius Brenzaida.

Julius wins power by violence and treachery; so Heathcliff
deliberately corrupts Hindley, gets possession of the Heights,
possibly murders him, or at least does not encourage him to live,
traps Isabella and later Cathy, ruthlessly exploits his own son, and so

⁵⁹ Stoneman, "Feminist Criticism of "Wuthering Heights,"" 152

becomes master of the fate of all the people round him. Julius, like him, is vivid, unscrupulous and violent.⁶⁰

Violence is another common thread that runs throughout both Gondal and *Wuthering Heights*. Although violent actions are not explicitly reserved for only the male figures, (as Catherine is quite violent as well) toward the end of the narrative violence at the Heights becomes commonplace between Heathcliff and Hindley. Chapter eleven of the novel is riddled with violence and corruption. First, Nelly goes to the Heights to visit with Hindley, but instead meets young Hareton who throws a rock at her and speaks with violent language. When Nelly asks Hareton who has taught him to act in such a way, he replies that it was Heathcliff⁶¹. Heathcliff then decides to pay a visit to Thrushcross Grange (where Catherine now lives with her husband Edgar) and while there, argues with Edgar and degrades his manhood and Catherine's choice in marrying him.

'I wish you the joy of a milk-blooded coward, Cathy!' said her friend.

'I compliment you on your taste. And that is the slaving, shivering thing you preferred to me! I would not strike him with my fist, but I'd kick him with my foot, and experience considerable satisfaction.

Is he weeping, or is he going to faint for fear?'⁶²

Heathcliff has always been a violent human, even from a young age when he would quarrel with Hindley. However, now his motives have changed and he has

⁶⁰ Visick, *The Genesis of Wuthering Heights*, 30

⁶¹ Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 95

⁶² Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 100

essentially created a war between *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange* over his jealousy for Catherine. In the poem dated 1838 from Julius to Geraldine (also known as A.G.A.), Julius expresses his sadness over being deserted by Geraldine for another lover. While we have seen that many of the poems have parallels to *Wuthering Heights*, this poem has been said to sketch out the relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff and his feelings of also being deserted by Catherine for Edgar⁶³.

The wild moorside, the winter morn

The gnarled and ancient tree—

If in your breast they waken scorn

Shall wake the same in me

I can forget black eyes and brows

And lips of rosey charm

If you forget the sacred vows

Those faithless lips could form—⁶⁴

Here, Julius is feeling defeated like a “gnarled and ancient tree” over the loss of his lover for another man. The third stanza (second shown) illustrates that Geraldine (A.G.A.) has in fact remarried, just as Catherine chooses to marry Edgar. In both instances, Julius and Heathcliff are losing their respective women to another man,

⁶³ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*: 578

⁶⁴ Emily Brontë’s poem as quoted in *Tales of Glass Town Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings*, 399

and this provokes their competitive natures. Heathcliff, in an attempt at making Catherine jealous, decides to marry her sister-in-law, Isabella Linton. Julius, at the end of the poem, says that although Geraldine has been adulterous, he has too and those other women will essentially free him from having to think about his loss.

And there are bosoms bound to mine
 With links both tried and strong;
 And there are eyes, whose lightening shine
 Has warmed and blessed me long:

Those eyes shall make my only day,
 Shall set my spirit free
 And chase the foolish thoughts away
 That mourn your memory!⁶⁵

I agree with Christine Alexander that this poem is a very clear parallel to Catherine and Heathcliff. Both Heathcliff and Julius are violent creatures that love deeply and passionately but when they feel defeated, are not afraid to seek revenge.

⁶⁵ Emily Brontë's poem as quoted in, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, 399-400

BACK TO THE BEGINNING: EXPLORING THE LIFE AND ENVIRONMENT OF EMILY BRONTË AND HER FAMILY

Now that we have seen the likeness between Heathcliff and his Gondal counterpart Julius Brenzaida, it is time to look at his relevance in Emily's life. As I have mentioned, Emily had a brother Branwell who had an active role in the juvenilia writing. Just as Catherine can be paralleled with Emily, Heathcliff can be with Branwell. First, let's look at the direct contribution that I believe Branwell contributed to Emily's novel—dialect. One male in the novel that we have overlooked until now is Joseph. Joseph is an older man who works the stables at Wuthering Heights and speaks in a very strong dialect. In chapter two we get the first look at Joseph's manner of speaking when Mr. Lockwood knocks on the door and nobody answers. Joseph says, "What are ye for?' he shouted. 'T' maister's down i' t' fowld. Go round by th' end o' t' laith, if ye went to spake to him.'"⁶⁶ Joseph is telling Lockwood that Master Heathcliff is not at home and to go around the barn to speak with him. As I have already said, Emily grew up in Haworth and was surrounded by her family and the townsfolk, who did not speak in such a way. Everard Flintoff in his essay, "Branwell at the Heights: an Investigation into the possible Influence of Branwell Brontë upon *Wuthering Heights*," claims that it was Branwell who taught Emily the dialect she later used for Joseph. Flintoff's argument centers on the fact that Branwell, "got around in a way that Emily never

⁶⁶ Brontë, *Wutheirng Heights*, 8

did.”⁶⁷ Branwell had a different set of artistic friends that Emily did not share and he interacted with people outside of his Haworth parsonage home.⁶⁸ Flintoff argues that by the mid-1830s Branwell had mastered the art of dialect writing and since the Brontë siblings worked together on their juvenilia, Emily would have known this and gained inspiration for Joseph’s character.⁶⁹ But it was not only Branwell’s knowledge of dialects outside of Haworth that he brought to the pages of *Wuthering Heights*, elements of his personality can also be seen in Emily’s writing.

I have already said that it is unclear whether Emily had romantic relations with a man, but her interactions with her brother could have been her inspiration for the male characters in her novel. Branwell, though he worked closely with Charlotte on *Angria* and *Glass Town*, of course had interactions with his other sisters, namely Emily. Emily saw her brother grow up and leave home, much like Catherine watched Heathcliff grow up and then leave the Heights. Of course, Emily did not break Branwell’s heart but both men left home at their own will. Margaret Hartley, the niece of Branwell’s landlady Mrs. Kirby, said that, “while sometimes he took the coach to Keighley, he on other occasions walked to Haworth across the moors.”⁷⁰ Here, we can see that Branwell was also fond of

⁶⁷ Flintoff, Everard. "Branwell at the Heights: An Investigation into the Possible Influence of Branwell Brontë upon *Wuthering Heights*." *Brontë Studies* 36.4 (2011): 322-35. JSTOR. Web

⁶⁸ Barker, *The Brontës*, 304

⁶⁹ Flintoff, 329

⁷⁰ Barker, *The Brontës*, 306

nature and walking along the moors found in Haworth, much like Emily herself does, and also Catherine and Heathcliff do in the novel.

Just as Branwell shares Heathcliff's enjoyment of nature, he also shares the darker side to his personality. Heathcliff did not become exceptionally angry until Catherine left him and married Edgar. Branwell too loved a woman who was married. "Though Branwell had over-indulged many times before, he did not become a habitual drinker until the abrupt ending of his affair with Mrs. Robinson."⁷¹ Emily saw Branwell when he returned home to Haworth after his heartbreak and Juliet Barker sheds light on her also seeing him drink to drunkenness out of self-pity. Just as Catherine in *Wuthering Heights* can be closely paralleled with Emily, Branwell can be closely paralleled to Heathcliff. I am not claiming them to be mirror images of each other, but rather claiming that Emily took her experience with Branwell at home and took his knowledge of the world outside of the parsonage as well as her view of his self-pity and applied that to the male figures in her novel.

Emily's Gondal poetry and *Wuthering Heights* are not the same story. The two works have different characters and are different styles of writing. Despite those differences though, the two are very closely paralleled. After exploring several key passages found in both the poetry and the novel, we have seen that ideas for *Wuthering Heights* came from Emily's work on her poetry over the course of her life. The poems are classified as juvenilia, but she worked on them up until

⁷¹ Barker, *The Brontës*, 469

the year of her death in 1848⁷². Crossovers are seen in the characteristics of the heroines in both works, but also in their male counterparts as well. After explicating several passages, we see that despite the fact that Augusta held several relationships with different male lovers, they all resembled Heathcliff's character traits. The elements of nature, supernatural events, and violence are all repeated throughout the various poems in the Gondal saga and are seen again in her novel.

It was not necessary for Emily to have the exact idea of *Wuthering Heights* in mind while writing her poetry to have the generic plot in her mind. What is important is to understand that Emily began writing the Gondal poetry as a child and was heavily influenced by her environment; she was read to and had access to her father's library collection, and therefore was well educated for a young woman in Haworth. I believe it is only possible that those environmental elements bled into her poetry and remained throughout the course of the writings. Those poems can now be closely related to *Wuthering Heights* in thematic principle and character development, and therefore it would not be impossible for her environmental influences to have gone into the novel as well.

The ability to look back into an author's past is crucial to glean a better understanding into their life and upbringing that can give key insights into later plot and story details of their adult narratives. Emily Jane was born July 30, 1818 six years after her father, Patrick, and mother, Maria, were married in Yorkshire⁷³. The

⁷² Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings*, LVI

⁷³ Juliet Barker. *The Brontës: A Life in Letters*. Woodstock, NY: Overlook, 1997. Print.

Brontë family moved to Haworth, England in 1820 and remained there for the duration of each of their lives⁷⁴. Emily's father, Patrick, was a native of Ireland and was born into the Brunty family. When he moved to England to attend St. John's College at Cambridge in 1802, his surname was changed to Brontë after his name was taken down wrong in the school records⁷⁵. After finishing his time at the university, Patrick returned home to visit once, but then went back to England where he met Maria and was married, never to return to Ireland again. In 1807, a year after graduating from Cambridge, Patrick received his ordination in the Church of England and remained a pastor for the rest of his life.

Growing up in the parsonage home was an asset, not a detriment, to the Brontë children. Although Emily's mother died when she was only three years old, and her two oldest sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, also passed away, she and her remaining three siblings, Charlotte, Patrick Branwell (Branwell), and Anne all were well taken care of by their father and several domestic servants. Patrick Brontë was both an attentive and tolerant father, and made sure that his children were given ample amounts of education⁷⁶. Emily received less traditional schooling than her sisters, but still spent a total of a year and a half in various schools throughout her

⁷⁴ "Who Were the Brontës?" *The Brontë Parsonage Museum and Brontë Society*. Brontë Society, n.d. Web. 1 Nov. 2012.
< <http://www.Brontë.org.uk/index.php>>.

⁷⁵ "Reverend Patrick Brontë." *The Brontë Parsonage Museum and Brontë Society*. Brontë Society, n.d. Web. 1 Nov. 2012.
< <http://www.Brontë.org.uk/index.php>>.

⁷⁶ "Reverend Patrick Brontë."

lifetime, including the Clergy Daughter's School at age six, Roe Head School at age seventeen, and the Pensionnat Heger between the ages of 24-25⁷⁷.

Although the Brontës did not lead a life of excess, they could have been labeled as middle class individuals. The parsonage at Yorkshire was large for its location, but small in comparison within the larger working class realm in England. Despite their monetary status, which did not allow for the family to keep a carriage, travel extensively, or to dress in the finest clothing⁷⁸, the children were all taught to read at an early age. Being literate before the 1870 Elementary Education Act, during a time when many individuals could not read, placed them higher on a social and intellectual level than most of their neighbors and peers⁷⁹. While they did not attend a traditional school for an extended period of time, Patrick made sure to give each child access to his library, and although he was a Tory himself, they were read to out of newspapers from various political parties⁸⁰, the stories from which would later play a role in their fictional works. Patrick taught his children about his love for military heroes, politics and nature and gave them all lessons in literacy, geography, history and mathematics while also providing tutors for art and music lessons⁸¹. It can be said that the lessons instilled onto Emily and her siblings from a very young age, not only contributed, but made possible, the ability to imagine, create and write the fictitious worlds that later led to their widely read novels. "Their juvenilia

⁷⁷ "Emily Jane Brontë." *The Brontë Parsonage Museum and Brontë Society*. Brontë Society, n.d. Web. 1 Nov. 2012. < <http://www.Brontë.org.uk/index.php>>.

⁷⁸ "Who were the Brontës?"

⁷⁹ "Who were the Brontës?"

⁸⁰ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XVI

⁸¹ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XV

represent the apprentice works of writers who produced such renowned novels as *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*”⁸². Elizabeth Gaskell, a writer and friend of the Brontë family who wrote *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, knew of the young author’s works and dismissed their importance. However, it has since been noted that she did in fact secretly understand the importance that their juvenilia held⁸³.

Thus far, I have suggested the fact that many of Emily’s experiences have found their way into her juvenilia writing as well as into her novel. Now, let us look more closely at those specific experiences. Firstly, Emily grew up in Haworth, Yorkshire, a place that was growing industrially but also laden with natural landscape with access to the Yorkshire Moors. I’ve shown the love that Emily has of nature through her many examples written throughout her poetry and her novel and in the letter Charlotte wrote to James Taylor. The setting in which Emily grew up found its way into Emily’s poetry and then into her novel. I have also mentioned that Catherine feels the most comfortable at her home at Wuthering Heights. Emily went away to school several times, but each time returned home.⁸⁴ When she went away to Law Hill, she returned after the winter months left her ill and she found that she was unable to write her poetry while she was there and “deprived of the power to write of her homesickness and unhappiness, Emily broke down.”⁸⁵ Even though Catherine never went away to school as Emily did, both females found that being in

⁸² Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XIV

⁸³ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XIII

⁸⁴ Barker, *The Brontës*

⁸⁵ Barker, *The Brontës*, 306

the comfort of their own homes was where they desired to be. Even when Catherine was married to Edgar Linton, she longed for the moors of *Wuthering Heights*.

Emily's interactions with her brother Branwell expand on my argument that *Wuthering Heights*, while it is not an autobiography, it does have many parallels to Emily's personal life. Branwell and Heathcliff are similar just as Emily and Catherine are similar. Heathcliff and Julius are similar just as Catherine and A.G.A. are similar. By following the lineage of A.G.A, to Catherine, to Emily and Julius to Heathcliff to Branwell, it becomes apparent that the novel, the poetry, and Emily's life are all intertwined.

Gondal was an imaginary world that took shape from actual world places and events. "But it was their father's passion for poetry and the classics, his own early 'indescribable pleasure' in writing, his enthusiasm for military and literary heroes of the day, for politics and military campaigns, and his love of nature, that provided the Brontës with a rich, if eclectic, imaginative life"⁸⁶. Although the Brontë children lived in Yorkshire, they were not without the means of human and world interactions. As the children of a pastor, they frequently saw churchgoers and also had a nanny who lived with them. It was the everyday happenings and surroundings that fueled the fiction behind the Gondal poems of Emily and Anne.

The Gondal world fused together the real world and its events with the fantastical elements of the girls' imaginations. "Only some poems from the Gondal sagas survive, but we know that the collaboration with Anne continued until the

⁸⁶ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XV

early 1840s, and it is possible that Emily never abandoned her imaginary world”⁸⁷. The siblings learned to work and write together from a very young age, which aided their imaginative development and allowed them to expand on their inner curiosities not only on paper, but also in conversation. Scholars have been able to learn about these collaborations, and more explicitly the collaboration between Emily and Anne through what has been found of their diary pages. The girls wrote a paper every three or four years, at which time they would take out the old papers and reread them to see the changes that took place in their lives and the world⁸⁸. It has been through the remnants of these papers, that we can see the immense amount of significance that the Gondal saga played in the girls’ everyday lives⁸⁹, thus rendering the poetry an integral piece to the question of autobiography within the pages of their fictional works.

Once Emily’s juvenilia work has been used to cast light on the possible autobiographical elements in the Gondal saga, it can also be used to indicate Emily’s response to the masculine world. By the time Emily was a toddler she lost her mother and her two eldest sisters to be raised primarily by her father, although Charlotte and the servants did play a role in her upbringing. Through the eyes of Patrick and her brother Branwell, Emily was exposed from an early age to a male dominated household and world. While reading the newspapers and learning of her father’s military heroes did expose her to the outside world, it also was a world outlook heavily cast by the male population. It was this masculine culture that

⁸⁷ “Emily Jane Brontë.”

⁸⁸ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XXXIL

⁸⁹ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XXXIII

fueled the sibling's imaginations⁹⁰. It is important to revisit here that while Emily and Anne were working on Gondal, Charlotte and Branwell were working on the male-dominated worlds of Glass Town and Angria. While it can be said that much of the work done in the Gondal saga is owed to their older siblings' work and characters⁹¹, it is important to recognize that Emily broke away from writing with her brother, which may be indicative to patterns formed later in *Wuthering Heights* with the character Catherine and her relationship to Heathcliff. Through Emily's early poetry we can see the beginnings of the themes present in *Wuthering Heights* including stories of personal resilience, powerful love and tragedy⁹². In the novel, Emily brings to light the question of female education and uses this as a tool to flip the gender roles known in society. "In *Wuthering Heights* the withdrawal of the opportunity to become educated is presented as one of the most cruel forms of oppression for both Heathcliff and Hareton"⁹³. Here, Emily flips the traditional role; in society the women would normally be lacking the right to education, but in her novel, it is the women who teach the men how to read. This could be due in part to her own upbringing of learning how to read as a young child. In *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine teaches Heathcliff and plays with him as a child because she understands the importance of social class and monetary worth, and selfishly, if she is ever to be in a relationship with him publicly, he must be capable of functioning in society as

⁹⁰ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XVII

⁹¹ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XXXIII

⁹² Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XLIII

⁹³ Carmen P. Riu. "Two Gothic Feminist Texts: Emily Brontë's "Wuthering Heights" and the Film "The Piano" by Jane Campion." (n.d.): n. pag. Rpt. in *Atlantis*. 1st ed. Vol. 22. N.p.: Alean, 2000. 163-73. JSTOR. Web. 25 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41054976>>.

well. Of course, this does happen, not on Catherine's watch, but it was Catherine's words in chapter nine that it would "degrade" her to marry him that pierced him so hard emotionally that he felt compelled to leave and become a man of worth⁹⁴. Although it was his action to leave, it was her words that made him do so, thus rendering the power back in Catherine's control. In the often-overlooked second part of the novel, Catherine has a child, Catherine II. This second Catherine is everything sincere that Catherine I was not, as she teaches Hareton to read out of the joy of teaching him and watching him learn. It's the teaching in the second generation that ultimately broke down the previous barriers that were built up over the course of the novel⁹⁵. Emily employs the complexity of the plot line to show that breaking down those barriers is no easy task, and even Catherine II must first marry, out of obligation, Heathcliff's son (thus showing a further connection between her and her mother) before she could marry Hareton out of love. Combining both the idea that much of her early writings infiltrated her later works and the idea that her family, including her father and brother, influenced her early works it can be argued that her family and upbringing also influenced her novel.

⁹⁴ Emily Brontë, and Margaret Drabble. *Wuthering Heights and Poems*. Ed. Hugh Osborne. London: Everyman, 1993. 69. Print.

⁹⁵ Riu, 168

THE FINAL MOVEMENT:
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

While it would be incorrect to say that *Wuthering Heights* is simply a recreation of the poetry of Gondal pieced together in prose form, it is still a work that resembles much of the same underlying themes and ideas, especially with the female characters of Catherine in her novel and A.G.A. in Gondal. We have explored and explicated Emily's use of natural imagery in order to create a sense of devastation and instances of turmoil but also have seen how nature is used to symbolize freedom, life and joy through Catherine and the moors found at Wuthering Heights. I believe that we can connect Emily's use of nature to her own personal experiences of living amongst the Yorkshire Moors. Emily did not have to experience violence in her home to physically feel the rough winds whip through the heather near her house. I think that we can conclude that as Emily began writing at a young age, her imagination was wild, and she easily could have implemented her experiences into her Gondal poetry, and then in turn, *Wuthering Heights*. Studying the supernatural and violent actions found throughout the themes of Gondal and the novel have also brought us closer to understanding that the parallels and crossovers between the novel and the poetry extend past mere coincidence into an intentional repetitive nature. This repetitive nature has led me to conclude that *Wuthering Heights* is more than an original novel by Emily, it is the result of a lifetime of writing that has culminated into the morphing of characters and their surroundings from scattered poems to one cohesive and well thought out novel.

Although the poetry of Gondal does not necessarily create a cohesive framework of a narrative, knowing the exact plot line or structure is unnecessary when studying the poems in relation to their thematic usage and character development. While A.G.A.'s relationships change and her circumstances develop over time, she is characterized overall as being a "passionate dark beauty, ruthless in both political and personal relationships, a female alternative to the Byronic heroes of Glass Town and Angria"⁹⁶. In *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff is considered the dark yet handsome, disturbed, passionate, obsessive Byronic hero of the story. It is interesting to see how Emily placed him with Catherine who resembles A.G.A. in many ways including her ruthlessness, her keen eye to what is and is not socially acceptable, and her passionate behavior. Catherine and Heathcliff entwine and circle around each other as their lives grow together and separate, eventually leaving them permanently separated by death. Catherine essentially kills herself and it can be said that she has done so over depression, or more commonly, a broken heart. Similarly, A.G.A. also passes away from a broken heart after an affair and several marriages and relationships⁹⁷. The key difference being that Augusta was murdered. However, Catherine again holds the power, as it was her choices that led to her downfall; she chose to marry Edgar and she chose to seclude herself while refusing to get better.

While no one will ever know exactly what Emily's intentions were in intertwining the female characters, the themes, or the storylines, it is necessary to

⁹⁶ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XXXVII

⁹⁷ Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings*, XXXVII

acknowledge that the two are similar in many ways. I would argue that her intentions when first embarking on the poetry were not necessarily to create a novel one day, but to have a creative outlet; the intention came later as Emily did choose to write a novel and, as the evidence we have seen proves, borrowed from her earlier poetry to help in creating themes and characters. In borrowing from her earlier poetry, Emily was also borrowing from her own life experiences to write the plot found in *Wuthering Heights*. We have seen that Emily had a strong pull toward nature and its elements and felt comfortable rambling out on the moors near her Haworth home. She grew up in a male dominated household, without a mother and with a preacher father. Despite the lack of a mother figure, Emily was given an education from her father, although she felt more comfortable at home and always returned soon after leaving for school. In addition to her father, Emily had a strong male influence from her brother Branwell who played a significant role in her novel. We have seen his assistance in Joseph's dialect, and his striking comparison to Heathcliff. Both Heathcliff and Catherine represent human nature's instinct to be both sinful and virtuous just as Emily and her brother were. Emily did not take her father's sermons and use them to write a novel full of Christian ideals; instead, she mocks them with her placement of love and passion and nature where God would firmly fit in a Christian household. Emily, as a person lived a life of simplicity amongst the Yorkshire moors in Haworth, but also a life privileged to contain a loving father and siblings who valued education and literacy. She was able to freely grow in her creativity just as she was able to freely roam in nature, just as Catherine was able to freely love Heathcliff and August was able to freely love all of her suitors.

Emily, as an author, had many different characters living within her thoughts and it would not be impossible for them to leak from one page to the next; in fact, that is exactly what has been demonstrated in looking at both the world of Gondal and *Wuthering Heights*.

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